

**THE ROLE OF PARENTS IN THE LEARNING ACTIVITIES OF CHILDREN IN
EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION IN TINDERET DISTRICT,
NANDI COUNTY**

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ABSTRACT

For effective ECDE programmes to take root, parents need to be involved in their children's schooling further by participating in learning activities. However, the nature of this involvement is not clear with regard to parents as their parental role in ECDE is not well defined or recognized. This study is intended to shed light on the role of parents in teaching and learning in ECDE in Tinderet District. This study was guided by the following objectives: determine ways schools engage parents in teaching and learning activities of children, examine the levels of home-school communication, identify the barriers to parental involvement and strategies to overcome the challenges of parental involvement in early childhood education centres in Tinderet District. The study adopted the Ecological systems theory that looks at a child's development within the context of the system of relationships that form his or her environment. This study was conducted through a descriptive survey research design. The target population of the study was 90 ECDE centres. The sample size comprised of 30 head teachers, 60 ECD teachers and 30 parents. Simple random sampling was used to select the ECD teachers and parents and purposive sampling to select headteachers. Questionnaires and interview schedule were used to collect data. The data was analysed using descriptive statistics with aid of Statistical Package for Social Scientist (SPSS) computer programme. From the study parents were welcomed into their schools, student-parent handbooks are given out at the beginning of the school year, information about school events is distributed regularly, and parents are invited to attend at least one school activity during the school year. Parents were informed in writing about how they may contact their children's teachers and print material was made available to parents in their primary language. School calendar of activities for parents was distributed monthly and parents are made aware of the various ways to reach the school about their concerns. The use of traditional methods in communication has been found to be an effective way for schools to communicate with parents, but this has been limited in use by schools because of time constraints. Schools and families face barriers to parental involvement such as time, inadequate communication and lack of knowledge on how to involve parents. Overcoming time and resource constraints, providing information and training to parents and school staff, restructuring schools to support family involvement by providing flexible times and places for parental involvement are solutions to challenges affecting effective parenting in ECDE centres. Schools should increase their efforts in enforcing the agreement of home school partnership and be given to parents at the beginning of the school year, so that parents become responsible in their role of educating their children at home. Schools should allocate funding to establish a resource center within the school for parents, organize seminars to educate stakeholders, including parents, on how to get involved in the education of their children.